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# Press Release

# NEWS

*Burlington County*  
*Board of Chosen Freeholders*  
*Mount Holly, NJ 08060*  
*Office of Public Information*  
*Phone 609-265-5028/Fax 609-265-5151*  
*www.co.burlington.nj.us*



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For Immediate Release:

Contact: Jennifer Horner

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(609) 265-5531

## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS FREE VACCINE TO COLLEGE STUDENTS**

### **Vaccine Protects Against Bacterial Meningitis & Blood Disease**

The Burlington County Health Department today announced it is making meningococcal vaccine available to all college bound students who will be living in a dormitory.

Meningococcal disease is a serious infection that can cause bacterial meningitis (swelling of the brain or spinal cord) or meningococemia (blood infection). The disease can be spread through common everyday activities, such as sharing eating utensils and drinking glasses, living in close quarters like dormitories or overnight summer camps, and kissing.

Parents and college-aged students are encouraged to make an appointment to be vaccinated by calling the Burlington County Health Department at (609) 265-5528.

“This vaccine can help protect college students from meningococcal disease,” said Robert Gogats, Health Officer for Burlington County. “The Health Department encourages those heading off to college to take the opportunity to get vaccinated to help protect them from this serious disease.”

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**PRESS RELEASE: Vaccine-students – 8/2/10 – Add One**

Currently New Jersey law requires students residing in campus dormitories at institutions of higher education to receive the meningococcal vaccine

Meningococcal disease strikes up to 3,000 Americans, killing 300 people every year. Ten to 15 percent of people with meningococcal disease die, and among survivors up to 20 percent may suffer long-term permanent disabilities including hearing loss, limb amputation, or brain damage.

Meningococcal disease can be hard to recognize, especially in its early stages, because symptoms are similar to those of more common viral illnesses. Unlike more common illnesses, the disease can progress quickly and may cause death or disability in just a single day.

The vaccine was made available through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009. For more information on meningitis and the meningococcal vaccine please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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